



****EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 GMT 17th NOVEMBER 2015****

Brussels, 17th November 2015

European Parliament Event: Europe's wood pastures: condemned to a slow death by the CAP?

Wood pastures are real, productive farming landscapes, but the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) discriminates against them as they are neither pure grasslands nor forests. The legislators and managers of the CAP only treat trees and shrubs on pastures in simple terms; as signs of land abandonment or of non-productive farming, making it more difficult for this farmland to receive CAP subsidies. Making it less financially viable means farmers are removing the trees and shrubs, converting wood pastures to forestry use or abandoning the pastures altogether.

This situation runs against the aims of EU environmental policies, especially the Biodiversity Strategy, and makes a mockery of the new “greener” vision for the CAP. The new system for pastures is also very bureaucratic and costly. It is clear that more work is needed to improve and simplify the policy details and implementation of CAP rules for pastures with trees. If this is not done urgently, the CAP may be condemning wood pastures to irreversible changes and a slow death.

This seminar in the European Parliament in Brussels on 17th November will present case studies and discuss the effects of European policy on these treasures of the landscape, recommending policy changes to ensure their active management and conservation.

Statements from the Organisers:

“European Commission Auditors (DG AGRI) are driving this problem by taking a very restrictive approach for allowing CAP direct payments on pastures with trees and shrubs. As a result, the new CAP is being implemented in an atmosphere of fear of controls and penalties, both for farmers and for Member States. This is leading to large areas of actively grazed farmland being left outside CAP support to avoid problems during the inspections.” - European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism

“Trees and shrubs provide important services in wood pastures, from forage, fruits and shelter for livestock to erosion control, carbon storage, firewood and a home for rare and protected plants and wildlife. Wood pastures are also cultural treasures and beautiful traditional landscapes. In some of the most magnificent wood pastures, ancient trees add special biodiversity and cultural value. We should not allow their destruction by badly implemented agriculture policies.” - Pogány-havas Association

“The latest reform of the Common Agricultural Policy has failed to support sustainable farming. Money flows to farms that ignore environmental concerns, while sustainable silvo-pastoral systems are shut out from support on the grounds of bureaucratic control. We need politicians to confront a broken system, not tinker with it.” - Birdlife Europe

Seminar Details:

Host MEPs

- Mr Csaba SÓGOR, Romania, EPP Group.
- Ms Clara AGUILERA, Spain, S&D Group, Vice-Chair of ComAgri.
- Ms Catherine BEARDER, UK, ALDE Group, Member of ComEnvi.

Time and venue

- 17 November 2015, 14.30-16.30, room ASP 3E2, European Parliament, Brussels.

Programme

Scene setting chaired by Csaba SÓGOR MEP

14.30 Welcome to the event.

14.35 The importance of Europe's wood pastures – Ted GREEN, Ancient Tree Forum

14.45 EU policies for wood pastures – Guy BEAUFOY, European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism

Member State case studies chaired by Clara AGUILERA MEP

15.00 Romania – Tibor HARTEL, Sapientia University Cluj Napoca and Pogány-havas Association

15.15 Sweden – Peter EINARSSON, Farmer and Swedish Society for Nature Conservation

15.30 Spain – Álvaro PICARDO, Technical Advisor to General Director in Natural Environment, Regional Government of Castilla y León

Policy messages chaired by Catherine BEARDER MEP

15.45 New CAP better or worse? – Trees ROBIJNS, BirdLife Europe

16.00 Christina BORCHMANN, Director, Unit J (Audit of Agricultural Expenditure), DG AGRI

16.15 Debate – representative(s) of the European Commission and audience questions

16.30 Closing remarks Csaba SÓGOR MEP

The Seminar will be followed by a light reception for participants to continue discussions.

The organisers

Pogány-havas Association is a regional development organisation working on a range of projects to increase local incomes, preserve cultural heritage, develop tourism and conserve the natural environment. The Pogány-havas area is in the Eastern Carpathians of Transylvania, in Central Romania.

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BirdLife Europe is a Partnership of nature conservation organisations in 48 countries, including all EU Member States, and a leader in bird conservation. Through its unique local to global approach BirdLife Europe delivers high impact and long term conservation for the benefit of nature and people.

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The **European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism** brings together ecologists, nature conservationists, farmers and policy makers. This non-profit network exists to increase understanding of the nature-conservation and cultural value of certain farming systems, and to inform work on their maintenance.

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